

Adopt-a-Village reaches former Taliban stronghold



Photo by Spc. Karlene Hemerly-Fluck, 109th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Pfc. Jeremiah Weinrich, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Combined Joint Task Force-180 (left) and Staff Sgt. Curtis Patrouille, 332nd Rear Area Operations Center, Osh Kosh, Wis., unload a truck full of aid to the people of Qali Nassro Saturday.

By Pfc. Christina Carde
11th Public Affairs Detachment

QALINASSRO, Afghanistan – As U.S. troops drove through the village of Qali Nassro Saturday, their watchful eyes peered carefully over the high village walls and tall abandoned guard towers to ensure the village's sad and dangerous history didn't repeat itself.

According to 1st Sgt. Steven Casaceli, noncommissioned officer in charge, 403rd Civil Affairs Battalion, Syracuse, NY., even though Qali Nassro was a part of a routine Adopt-a-Village mission, it is different than many other villages.

"This village was once occupied by the largest number of Taliban forces in this area," said Casaceli. "The Taliban used it as their front line of operations while robbing and oppressing the village people."

Ziauddin, the village commander, reflected on the time the Taliban was in power and said he is glad they are gone.

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Royal Thailand Engineers make historic deployment

By Maj. William Mott
11th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – In a historical deployment, the Royal Thailand Engineer Company Task Force represents the first deployment of Thai forces outside of West Asia.

Deployed with 103 tons of road engineering equipment and more than 100 specially chosen, trained and highly professional troops, the Thailand engineer company is ready to employ their skills in horizontal and vertical engineering projects.

"Our mission is overall general construction as needed throughout Bagram Air Base and airstrip repair," said Maj. Siraphop Supavanich, company commander. "This team of engineers was hand picked from thousands of volunteers and went through skills testing and training before they were chosen to deploy on this mission."

A self supporting force, the Thai company has its own security force, medical team, logistics professionals and 90 highly trained and experienced engineers who have participated in engineer projects in far off regions like East

Timor. Their headquarters has legal, finance, signal, dining and supply personnel.

The Thai are not only taking care of themselves, but they are sharing their resources with coalition forces here. On the humanitarian front, a 12-person medical team managed by two doctors sends medics to augment the Korean hospital in treatment of Afghan patients. The medics also provide medical support to the 527th engineers mine clearing effort. They also collaborate with the Korean engineers on road repair.

For force protection, their 18-

person security team coordinates with the Combined Joint Task Force-180 psychological operations team on force protection issues.

"The 45 days of training in Ratchaburi, Thailand that the troops went through on Nuclear, Biological and Chemical classes, cold weather training and English language familiarization, produced a great company of engineers and soldiers," said Maj. Supot Kraisoowat, company executive officer. "We got world-class com-

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World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



A vehicle of the U.S. Army's 3rd Battalion, 69th Regiment Armor Task Force, is part of the coalition's control of Baghdad's international airport.

Coalition encircles Baghdad

NEAR BAGHDAD, Iraq — U.S.-led coalition forces encircled Baghdad Sunday, closing off highways in and out of the Iraqi capital while Iraqi soldiers manned the streets and hunkered down for battle.

With the coalition ringing the city, the No. 2 U.S. general urged the Iraqi troops to lay down their arms or pay the consequences for defending Saddam Hussein's regime.

"We prefer that the leaders of the Iraqi armed forces do the honorable thing — stop fighting for a regime that does not deserve your loyalty," Gen. Peter Pace, the vice chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, said on CNN's "Late Edition."

"Surrender your forces and give yourselves and your troops the opportunity to be a part of Iraq's future and not a part of Iraq's past."

British 'taking control' of Basra

BASRA, Iraq — British forces have made their largest incursion into Basra, setting up a base inside in Iraq's second-largest city.

The British military reported three of its soldiers were killed as forces moved to secure the strategic city of Basra in an early morning raid on Sunday.

British officials stressed their forces had not taken full control of the southern Iraqi city — they were meeting pockets of resis-

tance throughout the area — but said they were "making good progress."

Troops entered the city from the south and west, with forces deciding to stay in Basra to begin securing the city for a humanitarian program, according to CNN's Diana Muriel.

Airstrikes two nights earlier killed a number of Baath Party officials, and left the resistance in disarray, turning Sunday's probe into a big push, British military sources told Muriel.

Bush, Blair to hold summit on Iraq

WASHINGTON — The future of Iraq after the war and without Saddam Hussein will be the focus when U.S. President George Bush meets Monday with British Prime Minister Tony Blair for a summit in Northern Ireland.

Also on the agenda will be how to jumpstart peace efforts in the Middle East and Northern Ireland, according to the White House.

The hastily organized two-day summit comes after rapid coalition gains in Iraq, which have increased the urgency of discussing who should run the country after Saddam is gone.

Blair has called for a larger U.N. role in postwar Iraq — a view at odds with the White House — and the summit will attempt to reconcile those differences.

The Northern Ireland location was chosen in part because of its symbolic value. The "Good Friday" peace accord — which created a new power-sharing authority with delegates representing Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic — was signed five years ago this week.

British: Airstrike likely killed Iraqi general 'Chemical Ali'

DOHA, Qatar — The Iraqi general known as "Chemical Ali," who reportedly ordered a deadly chemical attack in 1988 against Kurds in northern Iraq, was "probably" killed when coalition forces bombed his home this weekend, British officials said early Monday.

The British military press office at U.S. Central Command headquarters here said

Gen. Ali Hassan al-Majeed probably died in the attack because they have identified his bodyguard as among those killed.

The office said al-Majeed — a cousin to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein — might have more than one bodyguard, leaving open the possibility that he is not dead.

Major Gen. Peter Wall, chief of staff for British forces in Iraq, said the Iraqi general "probably" died in the airstrikes.

Apparent 'friendly fire' kills 18, Kurdish officials say

ERBIL, Iraq — A U.S. warplane attacked a convoy of Kurdish Peshmerga guerrillas Sunday in northern Iraq, killing 18 people and wounding 45 in an apparent incident of "friendly fire."

The dead include 17 Kurdish fighters and Kamaran Abdel-Razaq, a civilian translator working for the BBC.

"We do know that one of our planes dropped bombs on that convoy, and that's all we know right now," Gen. Peter Pace, the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told CNN.

Among the wounded were the son and brother of one of the leaders of Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq.

Russian convoy fired on in Iraq

FALLUJAH, Iraq — A convoy of vehicles carrying Russian diplomats and journalists came under fire Sunday as it headed out of Baghdad, the Russian Foreign Ministry said.

There were conflicting reports about how many people were hurt, who was responsible, and whether the convoy was attacked or accidentally caught in crossfire between Iraqi and coalition troops.

U.S. Central Command said the convoy was attacked in territory controlled by the Iraqi government, and that no coalition forces were operating in the area at the time of the incident.

U.S. Army officials with the 3-7th Cavalry said coalition soldiers did not fire on the convoy and that the shooters were probably from Saddam Fedayeen, fighters loyal to Saddam Hussein.

Talent show presents Bagram troops' musical skill

Story and photo by
Spc. Rick Robinson
11th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan — Service-members packed the Dragon Palace Saturday, to watch soldiers, airmen and Marines show off their talents.

The show was a mix of talent: gospel and rhythm and blues singers were the main ingredients with a country guitar player and the voice of a Judy Garland fan.

Spc. Jason Jaques, mail clerk, U.S. Army Reserve, Chicago Ill., 300th Adjutant General Postal Company, received a standing ovation from the packed house after performing five country songs.

Jaques, a professional musician as a civilian, said he wasn't worried about the competitive aspect of the show.

"It was just something to do," said Jaques. "I just wanted to play."

Another participant echoed those thoughts.



Spc. Jason Jaques performs at the Dragon City Morale, Welfare and Recreation building here Friday night. Jaques says performing for audiences helps him meet people.

"I wasn't really concerned with winning. I wanted to have fun. I've always enjoyed singing," said Pv2 Terri Rorke, journalist, 11th Public Affairs Detachment, Fort Polk, La.

Rorke sang "Over the Rainbow" by Judy Garland twice during the show. "It's my favorite song," said Rorke. "It always meant a lot to me. I'm a dreamer."

Technical difficulties during her first performance prevented her from finishing, resulting in an encore performance.

Jaques, who performed second in the

show, stepped on stage a second time when no one else was willing to perform.

Both performers have past experience performing.

"I've been playing since 1998," said Jaques. "I taught myself how to play the guitar. I play opera house music, country — as long as it moves me, I'll play it."

"I sang with Jag Star when they visited Afghanistan," said Rorke. "I spent time with the band and got to know them. The lead singer was ill and they needed a replacement. They asked me if I wanted to sing in her place and I said 'sure.'"

Both enlisted entertainers said they enjoyed the experience and would love to perform again.

"Shows like these boost our morale," said Jaques. "It helps people feel good about themselves. I hope they have more."

"I'd want to sing again if they had another show," said Rorke. "I'd regret not signing up. I like performing. I like making people happy."

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"The Taliban forced their way into our village and stayed here for about three years," said Ziauddin. "They took anything they wanted and burned many of our houses and courtyards. In fear, a lot of people fled the village and moved to Pakistan."

As Casaceli and Ziauddin toured Qali Nassro, they walked over mounds of mud and rubble which used to be people's homes, businesses and places of worship.

"Several years ago, this used to be a very beautiful village," said Casaceli. "The houses were grand with scenic courtyards and flourishing vineyards with a well for every house. Truly a lovely place."

With the Taliban long gone, the people of Qali Nassro are looking towards happier days where they can live and prosper in peace with the surrounding villages. Un-

fortunately, their neighbors don't feel the same way."

"Because the Taliban was here for so long, the other villages don't trust the people here," said Casaceli. "Even after the Taliban practically destroyed the village and drove its people into poverty, Qali Nassro was still ostracized by its neighbors."

With no help from their neighbors, and little resources to help themselves, the villagers were almost out of options, until two U.S. units decided they were not going to let Qali Nassro be another Taliban statistic.

The 332nd Rear Area Operations Center, Osh Kosh, Wis., and 5th Platoon, 310th Chemical Company, Fort McJannet, Ala., rode into the village Saturday with food, school supplies, toys and a promise of more help to come.

"Most of these supplies come from folks back home and some of them were left by the pla-

toon we replaced," said 1st Lt. Stephanie Zeigler, platoon leader, 310th Chem. Co. "This is our first official Adopt-a-Village mission, but we are planning to do more."

According to Zeigler, the decision to adopt Qali Nassro was based on the response from the soldiers.

"I didn't want to get the troops involved in something they didn't want to do so I asked them if adopting this village was something they wanted to be a part of. The decision was almost a unanimous yes," said Zeigler. "I think the troops understand that even though this isn't our primary mission in Afghanistan, it's good to help those less fortunate, and give them hope for the future."

However, the village's hope for the future will depend on more than just some candy and toys.

"The villagers that fled to Pakistan will be returning soon now that it is safer," said Ziauddin. "We

will need wells, schools and materials to rebuild our homes so they have something to come back to."

Casaceli said many of these things will take time, but Qali Nassro is a priority on the U.S.'s to-do list.

"Wells and schools are the first things we will try to implement," said Casaceli. "These people need clean drinking water and their children are the future of Afghanistan. They need to be educated."

Zeigler said even though she is happy to help these people she could never relate to what they've been through.

"Even in the hardest times of my life, I have never had to battle hunger, poverty or oppression," said Zeigler. "I look at these people and I think of how fortunate I am to have a warm tent to sleep in at night and food to eat. This is definitely an unforgettable experience."

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bat training from an Australian unit that had deployed to Bagram Air Base to familiarize ourselves with the environment.”

The scope of their mission includes interior building construction like the electrical work they are currently doing for the 82nd Airborne Division headquarters building. They also received a major mission from the 527th Engineer Battalion to build a concrete Large Area Maintenance Shelter.

Thai forces reconstructed Cambodia after the Vietnam Conflict, and continue to perform humanitarian and civil assistance missions with the United Nations throughout West Asia.

“In 2000, we went to Cambodia with two engineering battalions to continue the process of mine clearing that we have been performing for years. We also build schools, medical centers or homes as needed whenever we travel,” said Capt. Winai Boonwijit, training officer.

“Most of our work is in Vietnam where we clear mines, build roads and bridges and we have even improved an artillery base we have there,” said Supavanich. “We have brought our finest soldiers to reconstruct the infrastructure of Afghanistan.”



Photo by Spc. Debralee P. Crankshaw

Playing around...

Pvt. 2 Randy Kromer, mortarman and Pfc. Steve Lopez, radio and telephone operator, both from Company B, 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, Fort Bragg, N.C., play football, while waiting for the internet, in the new PlayStation 2 game room in Dragon Palace. The room contains six PlayStations. Games and controllers may be checked out.

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

1530Z at the MWR building: “Fear dot com.” Four bodies are found in New York City. The coincidence: they all died 48 hours after logging on to a site named feardotcom.com...

Tomorrow’s movie will be “Juwanna Man.”



Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	Today	Tuesday
Bagram:	Dust H: 68F L: 43F	Dust H: 66F L: 39F
Kandahar:	Partly cloudy H: 86F L: 57F	Clear H: 88F L: 59F
Kabul:	Mostly cloudy H: 68F L: 39F	Haze H: 63F L: 39F
Uzbekistan:	Mostly cloudy H: 84F L: 58F	Mostly cloudy H: 86F L: 56F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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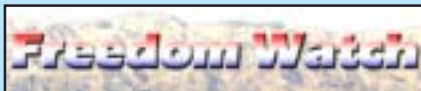
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Sixteen teams competed in the first Bagram double-elimination basketball tournament Sunday in Air Force Village.

Bagram b-ball tourney a slam dunk

Story and photo by
Spc. Debralee P. Crankshaw
11th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – Sixteen teams competed in the first Bagram double-elimination basketball tournament Sunday in Air Force Village.

The teams consisted of four players and one substitute. The games were played to 11 points or 13 minutes, whichever came first.

"I wanted to keep the spirit of 'one team, one fight.' We are all separated on different compounds. This was a chance for everyone to come together," said event coordinator, Air Force Staff Sgt. Reginald Bunting, 455th Expeditionary Operations Group.

Bunting coordinated through Morale, Welfare and Recreation and Kellogg, Brown and Root.

"It was a joint effort by everyone and I thank them for all they did to make this a success," said Bunting.

Bunting is planning another tournament because some teams who wanted to could



Airman 1st Class Jennifer Bunting, fire fighter, Bagram Fire Department, serves hamburgers and hot dogs during the tournament.

Out here nobody is Army, nobody is Air Force – we're just ball players," said Bunting.

Jimmy Ferrazas, Kellogg, Brown and Root labor foreman/Morale, Welfare and Recreation staff agreed.

"I didn't think this many people would show up," he said.

Due to a dust storm, the final four games will be played Sunday at 0500Z. The winners will receive T-shirts and coins.

not sign up due to the 16-team limit. MWR and Bunting were impressed with the turn-out.

"I think we could have gotten more people. I'm glad the Slovak and Korean teams played. It represents everyone.



Although the tournament went well, a dust storm caused the postponement of the final four games. They will be played Sunday at 0500Z.



Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from *ESPN.com*)



Teenage sensation Wayne Rooney struck again.

Everton moves to fifth with victory

LIVERPOOL, England — Teenage striker Wayne Rooney guided Everton to a controversial 2-1 victory over Newcastle United on Sunday and dealt a hammer blow to the Tynesiders' title hopes.

Rooney, who helped England to a vital Euro 2004 qualifying win over Turkey on Wednesday, rounded off an unforgettable week for the 17-year-old by heading Everton in front after 18 minutes at Goodison Park.

French winger Laurent Robert rifled in a stunning equalizer just before halftime, but a superb solo run and pass by Rooney for Kevin Campbell led to a match-winning penalty converted by David Unsworth in the 65th minute.

However, Newcastle boss Bobby Robson was fuming after the referee ignored a knee-high tackle by Everton's Danish midfielder Thomas Gravesen on Olivier Bernard before the ball even reached Rooney for his run.

"I thought it was an outrageous tackle, it's almost a red card," Robson told Sky Sports. "He already has a yellow card, so we know he has to go off. I just couldn't understand Mr. (Neale) Barry not seeing it and giving it."

Only goal difference keeps Man U second

LONDON — Arsenal's lead at the top of the Premier League was down to just goal difference on Saturday after the champion was held 1-1 at Aston Villa and Manchester United crushed 10-man Liverpool 4-0.

United had put the pressure on Arsene Wenger's side by moving on to 67 points with an early kickoff win at Old Trafford sealed by two Ruud van Nistelrooy penalties and strikes from Ryan Giggs and Ole Gunnar Solskjaer.

Arsenal responded by taking a second-half lead at Villa Park but an own goal by Ivory Coast midfielder Kolo Toure left Wenger's men also on 67 points.

Goal difference, with 67 scored and 34 conceded by Arsenal, compared to United's 55-27, kept the Double winners on top with just six matches left to play.

The turning point in United's game came in the fourth minute, when defender Sami Hyypia bundled Van Nistelrooy over in the penalty area, resulting in a red card for the Liverpool captain and a spot-kick which the Dutch striker easily converted.

Van Nistelrooy netted his 34th goal of the season with his second penalty, Giggs struck in the 78th minute and Solskjaer fired the fourth past a motionless Jerzy Dudek as United avenged its 2-0 defeat by Liverpool in last month's League Cup final.

Harkes played in two World Cups

COLUMBUS, Ohio — John Harkes retired from soccer Saturday, ending a career that helped launch the resurgence of the sport in the United States.

"Although this is something every player has to face at some stage, it is very difficult," Harkes said. "Yet, instead of crying because my career is over, I'm smiling because my career happened."

Harkes, 36, played for the U.S. national team that qualified for the 1990 World Cup, the first appearance by the Americans in soccer's premier event since 1950.

Harkes played for the U.S. team at the 1994 World Cup in the United States and was captain of the American team from March 1996 to March 1998, when he was dropped from the team by coach Steve Sampson. The midfielder had six goals in 90 appearances with the national team from 1987 to 1998.

He signed with Sheffield Wednesday in England after the 1990 World Cup, and in 1993 became the first American to play in The Football Association Cup final and to score in the League Cup final. After three seasons with Sheffield United, he spent two with Derby County and one with West Ham United.

Deportivo moves into second

MADRID, Spain — Deportivo Coruna displaced Real Sociedad from second spot in the Spanish first division after it came from behind to claim a 2-1 win against the Basque side in a pulsating match at the Riazor on Sunday.

The win, which allowed Deportivo to leapfrog its opponents by virtue of its better goal difference, plays into the hands of leader Real Madrid, which stretches its lead at the top of the table to six points as a result of the weekend's matches.

Substitutes Fernando Morientes and Javier Portillo came to Real's rescue on Saturday with three late goals to help it to a barely-deserved 3-1 win over relegation-threatened neighbours Rayo Vallecano.

Defending champions Valencia effectively said goodbye to its hopes of retaining the title after it lost 2-0 at Real Betis on Saturday and are now trail 13 points behind Real in fourth with 10 games left

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until the end of the season.

At the other end of the table relegation-threatened Recreativo Huelva hauled themselves off the bottom for the first time in six months thanks to a 1-0 win away to Valladolid.

The Andalucians, who will play Real Mallorca in the final of the King's Cup at the end of the season, move a point ahead of Rayo Vallecano but still remain deep in the relegation zone.

Inter Milan wastes two-goal lead

MILAN — Inter Milan's title hopes suffered a serious blow on Sunday as it let slip a two-goal lead to draw 3-3 at home to AS Roma and leave leaders Juventus five points clear.

After falling behind to an Antonio Cassano goal just seconds after the restart of what was to be an action-packed second half, Inter equalized through Christian Vieri and then took the lead with a brilliant solo goal from Alvaro Recoba in the 59th minute.

When Turkish midfielder Emre made it 3-1 in the 77th minute, the three points looked in the bag for Hector Cuper's side, which is searching for its first Italian league title since 1989.

But an own goal from Luigi Di Biagio in the 83rd minute gave Fabio Capello's side some hope and a minute later the home crowd was stunned as substitute Vincenzo Montella curled a beautiful shot over a sprawling Francesco Toldo and into the top corner to make it 3-3.

Inter, which faces AC Milan in the derby next week must now hope that Juve slips up at least twice in the remaining seven games.

Celtic lose ground in Scotland

PARIS — Monaco slumped to a 1-0 home defeat against neighbor Nice on Sunday and has lost the lead of the French Ligue 1 to defending champions Olympique Lyon, 2-1 winners over Le Havre on Saturday.

With six matches to go until the end of the championship, Lyon is two points ahead of the Principality team and Olympique Marseille, which have both lost their last two home matches.

The Monaco-Nice game was a tense affair between the two Cote d'Azur neighbors with Monaco aiming at recovering top spot and Nice, surprise leaders of the first part of the season, still dreaming of a European berth.

There was not a single shot at goal until a Jerome Rothen free kick saved by Nice goalkeeper Damien Gregorini in the 65th minute but heavy tackles were in plentiful supply.

Nice broke the deadlock after 78 minutes when Kaba Diawara, set up by Romain Pitau, lobbed Monaco's goalkeeper Flavio Roma.

Monaco's desperation was joy for Olympique Lyon which kept the leadership it clinched on Saturday with their win over lowly Le Havre.

International midfielder Eric Carriere scored five minutes before the final whistle when the champions seemed to be heading for a lackluster 1-1 draw after first half goals by Sidney Govou for

Lyon and Jean-Michel Lesage for Le Havre.

"It was very hard but the three points are welcome," said Lyon coach Paul Le Guen. "We were a little bit lucky this time, but we did not have much luck in the beginning of the season."

ManU's Ferguson upset with draw

LONDON — UEFA has condemned Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson's attack on the Champion's League quarterfinal draw as "unfortunate and silly."

Ferguson, whose side face defending champions Real Madrid on Tuesday, hinted in the British media that the draw was loaded to keep teams from the same country apart.

"The remarks are unfortunate and silly," UEFA spokesman Mike Lee said on Sunday.

"The draw is open. It's done in front of television cameras and all the club representatives, including those from Manchester United.

"It's produced some great ties for this next round in this fantastic competition.

"We just have to accept that unfortunately in European football people sometimes, for whatever reason, take views that there's one bias or another.

"These comments don't fit with reality," Lee added.

Blatter's current run ends in 2006

ZURICH, Switzerland — FIFA president Sepp Blatter may consider standing for a third term in charge of world soccer's governing body, the Sonntags Zeitung newspaper reported on Sunday.

Blatter, who will be 70 when his current presidency ends in 2006, was re-elected last year for his second term in office following a controversial election battle that resulted in several legal actions being taken.

"I'll have to give you a warning this time sir, but try to be a little more careful in the future."



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By Kevin Kilgore

Laugh Support